

the beat program as well as badly needed prevention initiatives.

Mrs. VUCANOVICH. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 728. During the last session, the Democratic-led Congress passed a crime bill riddled with problems and weaknesses. Most notably, it would have spent billions of dollars on questionable social spending disguised as crime prevention.

The crime bill also placed so many conditions on local governments to receive Federal funds to hire more police that many could not even afford to apply for these funds.

To make matters worse, it assumed that all police departments needed or wanted to hire more police, ignoring the reality that many strongly felt that they could use the money in more effective and efficient ways—such as modernizing outdated equipment and hiring civilian office workers to move desk cops out on the streets.

Last year, I tried to offer an amendment to give local law enforcement flexibility to use these grants for these other important purposes—only to be rejected by the Rules Committee.

H.R. 728 addresses both problems. It authorizes \$10 billion of block grants over 5 years for law enforcement, replacing the police and crime prevention sections of the crime bill.

These grants can be used, among other things, to hire new officers, purchase equipment and technology directly related to law enforcement, pay overtime to current officers, enhance school security and establish citizen neighborhood watch programs. In other words, the \$4 billion in mandated social spending in the crime bill are gone and police departments now have the flexibility to spend Federal funds as they see fit.

After all, they are the ones on the front lines in the war on crime and certainly know better than Washington bureaucrats how to more effectively combat our crime problem.

Mr. Chairman, I am also very pleased that H.R. 728 preserves the Violence Against Women Act provisions in last year's crime bill.

This section created Federal penalties for interstate stalking or domestic abuse, strengthened existing Federal penalties for repeat sexual offenders and required restitution to victims in Federal sex offense cases. In addition, it created a civil rights violation for violent crimes motivated by gender, allowing victims of such crimes to sue for damages or court-ordered injunctions.

The act also authorized \$1.6 billion over 6 years for programs to fight violence against women.

Mr. Chairman, H.R. 728—in combination with the other crime bills passed by the House during the past week—is a vast improvement on last year's crime bill and I urge my colleagues' support of this legislation.

Mrs. COLLINS of Illinois. Mr. Chairman, we all recall last year's unfounded cries by the GOP that the 1994 crime bill was loaded with pork. Well, I've got news for you and the American people watching this debate today. H.R. 728, the Local Government Law Enforcement Block Grants Act, is the true oinker. This thing squeals so loud, you'd think we were considering a farm bill instead of a crime bill.

Last year, the body made a commitment to the American people that we would tackle their concerns about crime with a targeted, smart, understanding approach and we did just that. Unfortunately, my Republican colleagues have decided to ditch this approach in

the name of political expediency and, ironically, have left a pigsty in their wake.

H.R. 728 is an absolute boondoggle. This legislation promises a whole heck of a lot, but guarantees absolutely nothing but the potential for abuse: \$10 billion of taxpayer funds will be shuttled to States and localities for the broad, general purpose of reducing crime and improving public safety with no specific goals up front and no indications that these funds will be spent responsibly.

Like the old Law Enforcement Assistance Administration grants that were plagued by mismanagement and fraud and finally terminated during the Reagan administration, grants under H.R. 728 could potentially go toward the purchase of so-called police patrol cars employed by high-ranking local officials for personal use, to support patronage jobs in law enforcement agencies, or to fund crime consultants whose only aim is to bilk the government.

My constituents strongly supported the addition of 100,000 officers to walk the streets, interacting in a positive way with average citizens and community leaders, strengthening the ties between law enforcement and localities, creating a safer environment in which our children can grow. Residents of several neighborhoods in my district in Chicago, such as North Lawndale and Austin, have been successful for some time now in organizing citizen partnerships with local authorities to tackle problems as they arise and ensure the continued vitality of the areas in which they work and live. In addition, suburbs in my district such as Maywood and Bellwood, IL, have worked diligently to create viable community policing programs and are in the process of starting these programs with the help of the 1994 crime bill.

H.R. 728 severely jeopardizes this progress. In fact, under this bill, there are no assurances that a single police officer will be hired.

Even more distressing is the fact that most all prevention moneys from last year's comprehensive crime legislation are gone, including the \$1.6 billion in long-awaited funds for the Local Partnership Act to grant cities the resources necessary to implement proven, cost-effective and much-needed health and educational crime prevention programs. Gone with that act is the 10-percent Federal set-aside I was able to include which would have provided localities across the Nation with the incentive to partner with small minority or women-owned businesses. I guess the GOP would rather build walls around some of the most disadvantaged areas of our cities and towns than provide relief and the hope of a successful future to hundreds of small enterprises and the neighborhoods in which they are located.

Also gone are the following: \$810 million in grants for a variety of after-school and summer programs for at-risk youth involving education, tutoring, and job preparation; \$626 million for up to 15 model programs intended to expand community services and new prevention strategies in high-crime, low-income areas; \$270 million for local community development corporations to implement vital economic revitalization projects such as those being undertaken on the West Side of Chicago, in my district, with the help of organizations like Bethel New Life, Inc.; and \$45 million in BATF gang prevention and education initiatives.

So as you can clearly see, we have before us a bill that substitutes uncertainty and irresponsibility for clarity and accountability. The American people have hardly called for such an extreme reversal.

Mr. Chairman, my Republican colleagues have rejected the common sense notion that giving individuals and families a greater stake in their communities, as we did in last year's crime legislation, is the best way to attack and deter lawlessness. They have rejected the belief that we need to provide hope and opportunity where there is little or none. They have rejected the fact that the threat of punishment and retribution neither prevents nor stops crime from occurring on its own. I strongly suggest we reject their irrational attempt to gut the 1994 crime bill. Vote "no" on H.R. 728.

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. All time for general debate has expired.

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. MOLINARI) having assumed the chair, Mr. GUNDERSON, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 728) to control crime by providing law enforcement block grants, had come to no resolution thereon.

#### SUNDRY MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Sundry messages in writing from the President of the United States were communicated to the House by Mr. Edwin Thomas, one of his secretaries.

#### PERMISSION FOR CERTAIN COMMITTEES TO SIT DURING 5-MINUTE RULE

Mrs. VUCANOVICH. Madam Speaker, I ask special leave that the following committees and their subcommittees be permitted to sit today while the House is meeting in the Committee of the Whole House under the 5-minute rule:

Government Reform and Oversight; the Judiciary; Science; Small Business; and Transportation and Infrastructure.

It is my understanding that the minority has been consulted and that there is no objection to these requests.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Nevada?

Mr. SKAGGS. Madam Speaker, reserving the right to object, I just wanted to make sure that all of this had been cleared. We have determined with our leadership that it has.

Madam Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Nevada?

There was no objection.